Argument For **The Electoral College In The United States**

Debate Prompt:

"The electoral college should be replaced with a national popular vote"

Team Notes:

Main Arguments

Origin of How and Why for the Electoral College: My Introduction.

Every few years, Americans revisit a familiar proposal: replace the Electoral College with a national popular vote. The idea sounds simple—every vote should count equally. But before we rush to redesign the foundation of our republic, we should ask: what kind of democracy do we actually want to preserve? The framers of the Constitution designed the system not out of elitism or distrust, but out of an understanding of human nature and the delicate balance required to hold a vast republic together. As Madison described it, the Electoral College was deliberately built as a *blend of the federal and the national*—a system that gives both the people and the states a voice in choosing the president.

Let's start where the Founders did—with human nature. Neatly summarized, Hamilton and Madison grew up in the shadow of Enlightenment thinkers who distrusted pure democracy. From Plato's "philosopher-king" to Hobbes's Leviathan, they learned a hard lesson: unrestrained majorities can destroy the liberty they claim to protect. Democracy, left to passion and impulse, becomes what Hamilton called "a disease," where demagogues manipulate the crowd's emotion instead of reason. Hamilton's reasoning here wasn't rooted in cynicism but in Machiavellian pragmatism—the belief, as Karl Walling notes, that good governance depends not on idealism but on anticipating the flaws of human ambition and channeling them through structure and law. The Electoral College was never about distrusting the people—it was about protecting them from political firestorms that could consume the nation.

Madison's *Federalist 10* makes this plain. He argued that a large republic could "refine and enlarge the public view" through representation—slowing down rash decisions, filtering public will through deliberation. The Founders saw "direct democracy" as mob rule; they designed a *mixed republic*, where both the people and the states had a voice. The Electoral College is one of the few remaining instruments of that balance—a structural handshake between democracy and federalism. This, at its heart, is the American idea—what could be called our quiet moral covenant, its musical phrase. And in this diminution, there is a powerful temperance; Every voice that may swell loudly is uniquely aware of this dance. This cadence. In total deference, the softest voice is more powerful than that of the entire movement. A harmony of individuals that recognize freedom *to* and freedom *from*. Out of this schism, *fantasia*. All will sacrifice for one—and one swells for all.

Critics of the system, from scholars like Jack Rakove to everyday reformers, are not wrong about its flaws. As *Beyond Sisyphus* notes, the Electoral College is plagued by "disparate results between the electoral and national popular vote" and "vulnerability to partisan manipulation at the state level." Those are serious issues—but Rakove himself concedes that any reform "must be able to pass every test of constitutionality and political legitimacy," and that the National Popular Vote Compact is "a political gimmick" fatally exposed to objection. Our position isn't against reform—it's against rashness. True reform must come through Article V, through constitutional craftsmanship, not a patchwork compact or populist shortcut.

The framers never imagined perfection. What they built was a buffer—a safeguard for unity in a diverse and sometimes divided nation. In a country that prizes both the individual and the state, the Electoral College remains a rare mechanism that keeps those loyalties in conversation rather than in conflict. It forces candidates to build coalitions that stretch beyond the coasts and beyond ideology.

And perhaps that's its quiet genius. As constitutional scholar Michael T. Morley observed, "The Electoral College's greatest advantage—the Framers' unintended gift to future generations to promote the peaceful transfer of power and protect the public legitimacy of the electoral process—is its limitation of the scope of post-election proceedings." It gives America what few nations can claim: the regular, peaceful transfer of power, accepted by winners and losers alike. In a democracy built on disagreement, that's not a flaw—it's our most enduring act of unity.

Main Arguments **FOR** Republicanism

1. **Filtered Judgment through Representation:** Citizens elect representatives to deliberate on their behalf.
   As Madison explains in Federalist 10, this "refines and enlarges the public view," restraining the volatility of pure democracy.

2. **Balance between Federal and National Interests:** Power is shared between the people and the states.
   In Federalist 39, Madison defines the U.S. system as "partly federal, partly national," preventing domination by any single region or majority.

3. **Guard Against Faction and Tyranny:** Republican structure fragments power to curb majority oppression.
   Montesquieu's and Hamilton's warnings about "the mob" and factionalism shaped this layered defense of liberty.

4. **Durable Stability through Structure:** Institutions channel human ambition into lawful order.
   Reflecting Hamilton's Machiavellian realism, the system assumes imperfection—and builds safeguards to contain it.

5. **Unity of the States:** The republic binds semi-sovereign states into a cooperative union while preserving their autonomy.
   As Hamilton and Madison both observed, the early states often viewed themselves as separate polities; republican design—through mechanisms like the Electoral College—ensured their continued participation in a shared national project without erasing their individuality.

Main Arguments **FOR** Pure Democracy

1. **Immediate Popular Will:** All citizens participate directly in decision-making.
   As Madison's critics feared, such immediacy risks decisions guided more by passion than reason, easily swayed by demagogues.

2. **Equality of Participation:** Each vote is counted identically, creating a sense of civic equality.
   Supporters claim this is the truest form of political fairness—no filters, no intermediaries.

3. **Moral Legitimacy of the Majority:** The majority's choice is inherently right because it reflects the people's voice.
   This view echoes the ancient Athenian ideal that authority stems purely from collective consent.

Main Arguments **Against** Pure Democracy

1. **Susceptibility to Passion and Demagoguery:** Direct rule invites decisions driven by emotion rather than reason.
   As Hamilton and Madison warned, large assemblies are easily swayed by charismatic figures and fleeting popular sentiment.

2. **Instability and Factionalism:** Constant majoritarian shifts prevent consistent governance.
   Without structural checks, popular rule risks devolving into mob dynamics and abrupt policy swings.

3. **Tyranny of the Majority:** The interests of minority groups are easily overridden.
   Plato, Hobbes, and later Madison all observed that pure democracy often destroys liberty in its attempt to express it.

Main Arguments **Against** Republicanism

1. **Distance from the People:** Representation can dilute or distort popular will.
   Critics argue that elected officials may serve elite interests rather than those of ordinary citizens.

2. **Complexity of Federal Balance:** The shared authority between states and the national government can breed confusion and inefficiency.
   As seen throughout early U.S. history, competing jurisdictions often led to paralysis or political standoffs.

3. **Potential for Entrenched Interests:** Institutional safeguards can harden into obstacles to change.
   Madison's "filtering" process can also insulate representatives from accountability.

4. **Slow Response to Crises:** Structural deliberation delays decisive action.
   Hamilton's emphasis on order and restraint, though stabilizing, can limit the republic's adaptability in emergencies.

5. **Fragile Unity of States:** The balance between autonomy and union is inherently unstable.
   In the founders' time, states often viewed themselves as near-sovereign entities; the republican system required continual compromise to prevent fracturing or regional dominance.

References

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers.* Edited by Lawrence Goldman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
Foundational essays articulating the constitutional framework of the American Republic. Madison's Federalist No. 10 and No. 39 provide the philosophical basis for balancing democracy with federalism, while Hamilton's essays frame the argument for stable, deliberative governance.

Morley, Michael T. Quoted in Jack N. Rakove, *Beyond Sisyphus: Some Thoughts on Electoral College Reform.* Stanford University, 2020.
Morley's observation that "the Electoral College's greatest advantage...is its limitation of the scope of post-election proceedings" highlights the institution's stabilizing role in ensuring legitimacy and the peaceful transfer of power.

Rakove, Jack N. *Beyond Sisyphus: Some Thoughts on Electoral College Reform.* Stanford University, 2020.
A constitutional critique of reform efforts, emphasizing that changes to the Electoral College must satisfy tests of constitutional legitimacy and cannot be replaced through political gimmicks such as the National Popular Vote Compact.

Walling, Karl. "Was Alexander Hamilton a Machiavellian Statesman?" *The Review of Politics* 57, no. 3 (1995): 419–447.
Walling interprets Hamilton's statecraft as pragmatic rather than cynical, influenced by Machiavellian realism—a perspective that anticipated the structural safeguards embodied in the Electoral College.

Reddit Commenters. *r/AskHistorians* and *r/Anarchy101* discussions, 2020–2024.
Contextual commentary on the Enlightenment philosophical influences shaping the Founders' distrust of direct democracy and their preference for representative republicanism.

Alexander Hamilton, Federalist, no. 71, 482--83

18 Mar. 1788

There are some, who would be inclined to regard the servile pliancy of the executive to a prevailing current, either in the community, or in the Legislature, as its best recommendation. But such men entertain very crude notions, as well of the purposes for which government was instituted, as of the true means by which the public happiness may be promoted. The republican principle demands, that the deliberate sense of the community should govern the conduct of those to whom they entrust the management of their affairs; but it does not require an unqualified complaisance to every sudden breeze of passion, or to every transient impulse which the people may receive from the arts of men, who flatter their prejudices to betray their interests. It is a just observation, that the people commonly *intend* the PUBLIC GOOD.

This often applies to their errors. But their good sense would despise the adulator, who should pretend that they always *reason right* about the *means* of promoting it. They know from experience, that they sometimes err; and the wonder is, that they so seldom err as they do; beset as they continually are by the wiles of parasites and sycophants, by the snares of the ambitious, the avaricious, the desperate; by the artifices of men, who possess their confidence more than they deserve it, and of those who seek to possess, rather than to deserve it.

When occasions present themselves in which the interests of the people are at variance with their inclinations, it is the duty of the persons whom they have appointed to be the guardians of those interests, to withstand the temporary delusion, in order to give them time and opportunity for more cool and sedate reflection. Instances might be cited, in which a conduct of this kind has saved the people from very fatal consequences of their own mistakes, and has procured lasting monuments of their gratitude to the men, who had courage and magnanimity enough to serve them at the peril of their displeasure.

But however inclined we might be to insist upon an unbounded complaisance in the executive to the inclinations of the people, we can with no propriety contend for a like complaisance to the humors of the Legislature. The latter may sometimes stand

in opposition to the former; and at other times the people may be entirely neutral. In either supposition, it is certainly desirable that the executive should be in a situation to dare to act his own opinion with vigor and decision.

John Locke, Second Treatise, §§ 157--58

1689

(See also §§ 134--42, in ch. 17 , no. 5)

157. Things of this World are in so constant a Flux, that nothing remains long in the same State. Thus People, Riches, Trade, Power, change their Stations; flourishing mighty Cities come to ruine, and prove in time neglected desolate Corners, whilst other unfrequented places grow into populous Countries, fill'd with Wealth and Inhabitants. But things not always changing equally, and private interest often keeping up Customs and Priviledges, when the reasons of them are ceased, it often comes to pass, that in Governments, where part of the Legislative consists of *Representatives* chosen by the People, that in tract of time this *Representation* becomes very *unequal* and disproportionate to the reasons it was at first establish'd upon. To what gross absurdities the following of Custom, when Reason has left it, may lead, we may be satisfied when we see the bare Name of a Town, of which there remains not so much as the ruines, where scarce so much Housing as a Sheep-coat; or more inhabitants than a Shepherd is to be found, sends *as many Representatives* to the grand Assembly of Law-makers, as a whole County numerous in People, and powerful in riches.

This Strangers stand amazed at, and every one must confess needs a remedy. Though most think it hard to find one, because the Constitution of the Legislative being the original and supream set of the Society, antecedent to all positive Laws in it, and depending wholly on the People, no inferiour Power can alter it. And therefore the *People,* when the *Legislative* is once Constituted, *having* in such a Government as we have been speaking of, *no Power* to act as long as the Government stands; this inconvenience is thought incapable of a remedy.

158. *Salus Populi Suprema Lex,*

is certainly so just and fundamental a Rule, that he, who sincerely follows it, cannot dangerously err. If therefore the Executive, who has the power of Convoking the Legislative, observing rather the true proportion, than fashion of *Representation,* regulates, not by old custom, but true reason, the *number of Members,* in all places, that have a right to be distinctly represented, which no part of the People however incorporated can pretend to, but in proportion to the assistance, which it affords to the publick, it cannot be judg'd, to have set up a new Legislative, but to have restored the old and true one, and to have rectified the disorders, which succession of time had insensibly, as well as inevitably introduced.

For it being the interest, as well as intention of the People, to have a fair and *equal Representative;* whoever brings it nearest to that, is an undoubted Friend, to, and Establisher of the Government, and cannot miss the Consent and Approbation of the Community. *Prerogative* being nothing, but a Power in the hands of the Prince to provide for the publick good, in such Cases, which depending upon unforeseen and uncertain Occurrences, certain and unalterable Laws could not safely direct, whatsoever shall be done manifestly for the good of the People, and the establishing the Government upon its true Foundations, is, and always will be just *Prerogative*. The Power of Erecting new Corporations, and therewith *new Representatives,* carries with it a supposition, that in time the *measures of representation* might vary, and those places have a just right to be represented which before had none; and by the same reason, those cease to have a right, and be too inconsiderable for such a Priviledge, which before had it.

'Tis not a change from the present State, which perhaps Corruption, or decay has introduced, that makes an Inroad upon the Government, but the tendency of it to injure or oppress the People, and to set up one part, or Party, with a distinction from, and an unequal subjection of the rest. Whatsoever cannot but be acknowledged to be of advantage to the Society, and People in general, upon just and lasting measures, will always, when done, justifie it self; and whenever the People shall chuse their *Representatives upon* just and undeniably *equal measures* suitable to the original Frame of the Government, it cannot be doubted to be the will and act of the Society, whoever permitted, or caused them so to do.

The Federalist, 10 (madison) The same subject continued…

Among the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed for their character and fate as when he contemplates their propensity to this dangerous vice. He will not fail, therefore, to set a due value on any plan which, without violating the principles to which he is attached, provides a proper cure for it. The instability, injustice, and confusion introduced into the public councils have, in truth, been the mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished, as

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they continue to be the favorite and fruitful topics from which the adversaries to liberty derive their most specious declamations. The valuable improvements made by the American constitutions on the popular models, both ancient and modern, cannot certainly be too much admired; but it would be an unwarrantable partiality to contend that they have as effectually obviated the danger on this side, as was wished and expected. Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally the friends of public and private faith and of public and personal liberty, that our governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority. However anxiously we may wish that these complaints had no foundation, the evidence of known facts will not permit us to deny that they are in some degree true. It will be found, indeed, on a candid review of our situation, that some of the distresses under which we labor have been erroneously charged on the operation of our governments; but it will be found, at the same time, that other causes will not alone account for many of our heaviest misfortunes; and, particularly, for that prevailing and increasing distrust of public engagements and alarm for private rights which are echoed from one end of the continent to the other. These must be chiefly, if not wholly, effects of the unsteadiness and injustice with which a factious spirit has tainted our public administration. By a faction I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects. There are again two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one, by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests. It could never be more truly said than of the first remedy that it was worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment without which it instantly expires. But it could not be a less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency.

The Federalist, 10 49

The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise. As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed. As long as the connection subsists between his reason and his self-love, his opinions and his passions will have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the former will be objects to which the latter will attach themselves. The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors ensues a division of the society into different interests and parties. The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities that where no substantial occasion presents itself the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property

have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of government. No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause, because his interest would certainly bias his judgment, and, not improbably, corrupt

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his integrity. With equal, nay with greater reason, a body of men are unfit to be both judges and parties at the same time; yet what are many of the most important acts of legislation but so many judicial determinations, not indeed concerning the rights of single persons, but concerning the rights of large bodies of citizens? And what are the different classes of legislators but advocates and parties to the causes which they determine? Is a law proposed concerning private debts? It is a question to which the creditors are parties on one side and the debtors on the other. Justice ought to hold the balance between them. Yet the parties are, and must be, themselves the judges; and the most numerous party, or in other words, the most powerful faction must be expected to prevail. Shall domestic manufacturers be encouraged, and in what degree, by restrictions on foreign manufacturers? are questions which would be differently decided by the landed and the manufacturing classes, and probably by neither with a sole regard to justice and the public good. The apportionment of taxes on the various descriptions of property is an act which seems to require the most exact impartiality; yet there is, perhaps, no legislative act in which greater opportunity and temptation are given to a predominant party to trample on the rules of justice. Every shilling with which they overburden the inferior number is a shilling saved to their own pockets. It is in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm. Nor, in many cases, can such an adjustment be made at all without taking into view indirect and remote considerations, which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the rights of another or the good of the whole. The inference to which we are brought is that the causes of faction cannot be removed and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects. If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principle, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote. It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the Constitution. When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object

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to which our inquiries are directed. Let me add that it is the great desideratum by which alone this form of government can be rescued from the opprobrium under which it has so long labored and be recommended to the esteem and adoption of mankind. By what means is this object attainable? Evidently by one of two only. Either the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority at the same time must be prevented, or the majority, having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression. If the impulse and the opportunity be suffered to coincide, we well know that neither moral nor religious motives can be relied on as an adequate control. They are not found to be such on the injustice and violence of individuals, and lose their efficacy in proportion to the number combined together, that is, in proportion as their efficacy becomes needful. From this view of the subject it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert results from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would at the same time be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions. A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect and promises the cure for which we are seeking. Let us examine the points in which it varies from pure democracy, and we shall comprehend both the nature of the cure and the efficacy which it must derive from the Union. The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens and greater sphere of country over which the latter may be extended.

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The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are most favorable to the election of proper guardians of the public weal; and it is clearly decided in favor of the latter by two obvious considerations. In the first place it is to be remarked that however small the republic may be the representatives must be raised to a certain number in order to guard against the cabals of a few; and that however large it may be they must be limited to a certain number in order to guard against the confusion of a multitude. Hence, the number of representatives in the two cases not being in proportion to that of the constituents, and being proportionally greatest in the small republic, it follows that if the proportion of fit characters be not less in the large than in the small republic, the former will present a greater option, and consequently a greater probability of a fit choice. In the next place, as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice with success the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried; and the suffrages of the people being more free, will be more likely to center on men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters. It must be confessed that in this, as in most other cases, there is a mean, on both sides of which inconveniences will be found to lie. By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representative too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these, and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects. The federal Constitution forms a happy combination in this respect; the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the State legislatures.

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The other point of difference is the greater number of citizens and extent of territory which may be brought within the compass of republican than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former than in the latter. The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked that, where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary. Hence, it clearly appears that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy in controlling the effects of faction is enjoyed by a large over a small republic—is enjoyed by the Union over the States composing it. Does this advantage consist in the substitution of representatives whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices and to schemes of injustice? It will not be denied that the representation of the Union will be most likely to possess these requisite endowments. Does it consist in the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, against the event of any one party being able to outnumber and oppress the rest? In an equal degree does the increased variety of parties comprised within the Union increase this security? Does it, in fine, consist in the greater obstacles opposed to the concert and accomplishment of the secret wishes of an unjust and interested majority? Here again the extent of the Union gives it the most palpable advantage. The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other States. A religious sect may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the Confederacy; but the variety of sects dispersed over the entire face of it must secure the national councils against any danger from that source. A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other

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improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the Union than a particular member of it, in the same proportion as such a malady is more likely to taint a particular county or district than an entire State. In the extent and proper structure of the Union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride we feel in being republicans ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit and supporting the character of federalists.

The Republic, Plato

Pure Democracy (or aspects related to its character):

557C: Democracy is described as the "most beautiful of the polities," colorful and appealing to those who "look at gaudy things."

557E: Democracy is called a "polity-bazaar" where one can choose any lifestyle.

558A: Freedom, free speech, and the ability for anyone to live as they please are highlighted as characteristics of democracy.

563D: The extreme freedom in a democratic city is detailed, including the equality of slaves and foreigners.

Minority vs. Majority (or discussions of the few vs. the many):

340A-B: Cleitophon clarifies that Thrasymachus meant the stronger's belief of what is advantageous, which the weaker must follow, highlighting the power of the ruling minority over the ruled majority.

428B-C: The city is wise through its "smallest group," the true guardians, who possess knowledge for the whole. This suggests a wise minority guiding the majority.

431C-D: Most people (the majority) have a "multitude and variety of desires," while "simple and measured desires" belong to the "few" who are "best in nature and best educated." The majority's desires are controlled by the "lesser number of more decent people."

433C-D: The agreement between rulers and ruled, or the judgment of the rulers, is most beneficial for the city, again emphasizing the role of a capable minority.

462A-B: The greatest evil in a city is what "tears it apart and makes it many instead of one," implying a potential division between groups within the city.

474B-C: Socrates anticipates "a great many people" will resist his claim that philosophers ought to rule, indicating the general opinion of the majority contrasting with the philosophical few.

489A: Socrates attributes the "uselessness" of philosophers to "those who have no use for them," (the majority) not the philosophers themselves (the minority).

494A: The "multitude is incapable of being philosophic," and therefore philosophers will be criticized by them and by those who align with the crowd.

500A-B: Socrates suggests the masses would change their opinion of philosophers if they understood them correctly, indicating a potential for the majority's views to be altered by the understanding of the philosophical minority.

501D-E: The masses becoming "more calm" about philosophers ruling if the truth is perceived.

519B-D: The uneducated majority cannot adequately manage a city, and philosophers must be compelled to rule for the good of the whole, implying the necessity of the enlightened minority for the city's well-being.

551D-E: Oligarchy is "not one but by necessity two" cities, "one consisting of the poor, the other of the rich, living in the same place and always plotting against each other," explicitly detailing a minority (rich) vs. majority (poor) conflict.

556E: The poor (majority) are not despised by the rich in battle and recognize their own strength.

557A: A "sickly body" (city) can fall into division on slight pretext, with outside forces allying with either the rich minority or the poor majority.

557B: Democracy arises "when the poor have won, and they kill some of the others, exile some, and give those who are left an equal share in the polity and ruling offices," illustrating a victory of the majority.

561D: The "democratic man" says and does "random things" in politics, reflecting the potentially uncoordinated actions of a diverse majority.

562D-E: Those who obey rulers are "smeared with mud" while rulers acting like ruled are praised, indicating the democratic majority's preference for popular figures over authority.

563D-E: The "extreme limit of the freedom of the masses" leads to slaves being as free as owners, and a "touchy" populace that resents authority.

565B: The "third group" in a democracy, "all those who work with their own hands, stay out of politics, and don't own very much," become the "most numerous and authoritative part" when they unite.

565C: The wealthy minority are accused of plotting when they resist the democratic leaders who distribute their wealth to the populace.

565D: The "people" in a democracy choose one leader, "building him up as someone great," which is the "root he sprouts from" for becoming a tyrant, highlighting the potential for a majority's choice to lead to tyranny.

590D: The argument suggests that laws and rule over children are set up so that even "someone of that kind" (those ruled by vicious parts of their soul) might be ruled by what is best, implying the necessity of external rule for those who cannot rule themselves, to create a harmonious community of many.

Thoughts?